GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3913
ANSWERED ON:13.12.2000
ARREST OF INDIAN FISHERMEN
P.D. ELANGOVAN

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken any steps to provide safety to the Indian fishermen venturing out in the Indian waters;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a large number of Indian fishermen were caught in the high seas by the authorities of the neighbouring countries, particularly Sri Lanka and Pakistan;

(d) if so, the details thereof, and the number of Indian fishermen arrested by the Sri Lankan and Pakistan authorities in the last five years, year-wise;

(e) the number of persons released in the above said period and the number of persons who is still detained in Sri Lankan and Pakistan jails; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to get them released?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a) & (b) Navy and the Coast Guard ships and aircrafts maintain regular surveillance in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and along the International Boundary Line (IBL).Assistance is provided to any Indian fishermen observed to be in danger while operating in Indian or international waters.

(c) & (d) The details for Sri Lanka and Pakistan are as follows:-

Sri Lanka

A number of Indian fishermen have been taken into custody by Sri Lankan authorities for intrusion into Sri Lankan territorial waters. The number of Indian fishermen arrested by Sri Lanka during the last five years, year-wise is as follows:-

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
75	41	55	26	19

Pakistan

A large number of Indian fishermen, fishing in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone and along the International Boundary Line get arrested by the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency. The number of Indian fishermen arrested by Pakistan during the last five years, year-wise is as follows: -

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
61	40	187	159	44 +

(+ The Government of Pakistan have so far confirmed detention of only 28)

(e) Sri Lanka

The number of Indian fishermen released by Sri Lanka over the last five years is as follows: -

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
75	41	55	26	18 +

(+ One fishermen died while in detention)

As of date, there is one fisherman in the custody of the Sri Lankan Government.

Pakistan

The number of Indian fishermen released by Pakistan over the last five years is as follows: -

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Nil	231++	195++	122	22

(++ These include Indian fishermen arrested during earlier years)
As per Government`s records, at present there are 128 Indian fishermen in Pakistani custody. Of these, the detention of 16 is yet to be confirmed by Pakistani authorities. Consular access has been provided to 84 of the 112 fishermen, whose detention has been acknowledged by the Government of Pakistan.

(f) Government of India are in continuous and regular contact with the respective Governments through diplomatic channels for securing the earliest release and repatriation of detained Indian fishermen.